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H. Caswell

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THE DEATH OF THE BELIEVER.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF BROWN UNIVERSITY,

JUNE 30th, 1850,

THE SABBATH AFTER THE DECEASE OF

MRS. ESTHER LOIS CASWELL,

WIFE OF

PROFESSOR ALEXIS CASWELL.

BY FRANCIS WAYLAND,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

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S E R M O N .

II. TIMOTHY, 1: 10.

OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH ABOLISHED DEATH AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL.

It is utterly impossible, my brethren, for us to form any conception of the intensity of meaning which these words conveyed, at the time when they were first uttered. We are so familiar with the stupendous truth which they reveal that it has, in a great measure, lost its significance. A disbeliever in a future state is now so rare that he is looked upon as a phenomenon difficult of explanation. His views are at variance with the almost universal belief of mankind, and we are forced to suppose either, that a life of sin has indisposed him thoughtfully to meditate on the idea of immortality, or, that the structure of his intellect, having been somehow subverted, he refuses to believe what to others seems so obvious as scarcely to be any longer a proper subject for argument.

Very different however was the condition of mankind when our Lord declared "Those that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation." At that time the idea of a future life had taken firm hold of but here and there an individual among the Jews. A large number of the chosen people of God, were Sadducees, "denying that there is any resurrection either angel or spirit." Of those who admitted these truths, the greater part held them almost as matters of mere speculation. If it were granted that man

would exist after death, and they were asked what is the nature of that existence and how shall we best prepare for it, they could furnish to such questions only a vague and unsatisfactory answer. A few holy men, from the workings of their own consciousness, aided by the divine light of the Old Testament, were convinced that their love of God and of all goodness must yet be satisfied by awakening sometime or somewhere in his likeness; but they rather looked into their own hearts for confirmation of their belief than to any acknowledged fact or any positive declaration on which they could rely with certainty.

If this was the condition of the Jewish, what must have been the condition of the Gentile world? On the heathen no light whatever had yet dawned. Their unseen world had been peopled by the poets with deities whom all thinking men acknowledged to be fabulous. Virgil had told them of a region of ghosts, where, for a while, all men dwelt amid unsubstantial shadows, again in other forms to revisit the earth, and pursue over again the phantoms of a sublunary existence. But all men knew that these were the creations of fancy, resting on no basis of evidence. Yet abolish these poetical dreams, and what was there left? Nothing, absolutely nothing. It was admitted that the vague idea of a futurity of some kind had floated for ages through the imaginations of men, but whence did it originate, and who was responsible for its truth? Who had ever returned from the other world to tell us of what was there transpiring? Where was the annointed messenger of the Most High, who had been commissioned to unfold to us the facts concerning the invisible state? The senses could not penetrate so far. The facts, if known at all, must be known by direct revelation; but during the long ages of heathenism who had been the revealer? All was involved in misty obscurity; and shadows, clouds and darkness rested upon it.

All the writings of classical antiquity with which I am acquainted are overspread with this darkness. Cicero indulged the hope that he should after death renew his acquaintance with the illustrious men whom he had known in his youth, because he supposed that such gifted men could not wholly have perished. But if this were the only reason, what hope did it offer for those who were not thus *gifted*, for the trodden down slave, or the despised barbarian. Plato has endeavored to demonstrate the truth of the immortality of the soul ; but it seems to me that no man who has ever doubted could be convinced by his argument. And hence the most thoughtful of the classical writers, rarely if ever, use the future world as a motive to present action. They spoke of immortality, it is true, and declared that they should not wholly die : but the immortality to which they referred was not the immortality of the soul but only of their works and actions. They wrote that the productions of their genius might be read by after ages. They conquered that their names might be inscribed on the pages of history. Their natural love of existence was turned into this channel, while of what became of the soul, if indeed any thing became of it, they seem to have been profoundly unmindful. Such was the case with the most eminent men, those whose writings have come down to us. But, if such were their ideas, what must have been those of the common people ? At the present day, in the full light of the gospel, we find that men exist deplorably ignorant both of God and eternity. What must then have been the condition of the ignorant when the minds of the most enlightened were groping in thick darkness ? It was all one solid mass of unmingled earthliness and sensuality : men were destitute of any thought of futurity, intent on pleasure like the brutes that perish, having no hope, living without God in the world.

It was to a world thus brutalized and lying in wickedness that Jesus Christ announced the stupendous truth, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." He first declared from the presence of the living God, that man would live after death, that he must live forever, that he must live in infinite happiness or infinite woe, and more than all, that it depends upon our moral character here, whether the immortality of every soul be a blessing or a curse. It is this truth that penetrated the ear of stupid, sensual and sinful humanity. It is this that aroused our race from the slumber of ages. It was a new truth and it was filled with wonder. It added infinite duration at once to the brief span of man's sublunary existence. It rendered every human being an object of inestimable importance. It teaches us that a single human soul is of more value than the material universe. It is of itself motive sufficient to change the whole course of human thought; to instil into the bosom of sensual man aspirations after infinite holiness; to give us victory over the world, and animate us to strive with breathless earnestness after that glory to which we are so strangely destined. It is no wonder that with the announcement of this truth, a new era dawned upon mankind. It is not strange that from this moment a new form of character was originated among men. Jesus Christ has taught us our destiny. He has offered to us a way of escape from the doom that we merited; he has himself, both by precept and example, taught us the manner of life by which we can alone be prepared for eternity; and he has gone to prepare for us mansions in his Father's house, where he ever lives to intercede for us. Therefore is it, that all our salvation is attributed to Christ; therefore is it, that the song of the redeemed will ever be "Unto Him that hath saved us, and washed us in his own blood and made us kings and priests unto God." But what is the truth that Christ so emphatically

revealed to the world thus lost in sensual enjoyment, hastening to the grave, the apparently eternal sleep of the whole race of man ? He has abolished death,—and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

1st. He has abolished death. He has banished forever from the minds of men the ideas which they formerly entertained on this momentous subject. Their language was, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die. He has taught us that death, that is the destruction of the soul, is forever impossible. Their question was what will be the difference hereafter between the brute and the man, since death lays his hand equally upon both. The Redeemer has taught us that there is a spirit in man which no change in his material frame can possibly affect. The duration of the spirit can be arrested by no power of our own or of all things created. All live unto God ; and until he reverse his decree, no one of us can cease to live.

2d. He has brought *life* to light, that is, he has shed upon our future life a flood of light ; He has given us all the information concerning it necessary to our preparation for its solemn realities. He has taught us the nature of that existence, the character of its enjoyments, the events which are to transpire after death, and the infinitely glorious realities of which we are then to come into possession.

3d. He has brought not only life but *immortality* to light. He has taught us that we shall live after death, but more than this, that we shall live with powers of happiness immeasurably increased. Death opens to us no longer the door of annihilation, but the portals of a glorious immortality. Such is the teaching which Christ has revealed to a world lying in the darkness and the shadow of death.

But let us now inquire a little more particularly what are some of the most important facts which the gospel reveals to us concerning the future state of the *believer*.

The scriptures teach us that at death the soul, the immortal part of man, leaves the body and enters at once upon a state of inconceivable blessedness. “*This day*,” said the Saviour, “shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” “Absent from the body, present with the Lord,” said the Apostle Paul. The soul, as it enters upon this state, leaves behind it all the infirmities and imperfections which cleave to its present state. Its probation is closed. Its trials are ended. Its battle is fought. The victory is won. It can sin no more. It can no longer be in danger of perdition. It is made, through Him that has loved it, perfect in holiness. It enjoys in a manner and in a degree of which we can form no conception, the immediate presence of Christ, being confirmed forever in his love, and made meet to be an inheritor with the saints in light.

There is reason to believe moreover that the souls of the saints cherish a deep interest in the moral events which transpire on earth. It is said that the angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We are repeatedly assured that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. If these beings of another rank watch over us with such earnestness, it is reasonable, at least, to suppose that their interest in us is shared by those who are heirs of the same salvation, who have passed through the same trials, and who are with us waiting for the same consummation of Glory.

Besides, whenever we hear the blessed dead spoken of in the New Testament, we find that it is in connexion with something done on earth. Moses and Elias appeared on the mount, and conversed with the Saviour concerning his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

So, when the apostle John in the Isle of Patmos was permitted to witness the mystery of the revealing, he beheld the saints praising God for his judgments on earth. And when he fell at the feet of him that shewed him these things, he was told, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." It was a glorified spirit of our own race that had been commissioned to unveil to him the wonder-working providence of God, preparing the way for the ultimate triumph of the church of Christ.

From these scattered hints we are, I think, justified in the belief that the soul made perfect in holiness will exist in the full consciousness of the love of God; that there will be about it nothing on which the eye of God does not look with approbation; that it will enjoy in full measure its likeness to the blessed Saviour; that it will observe the present condition of the work of redemption on earth, will hail with rapture every indication of its success, and at every step of its progress, see new and overwhelming reasons for adoring the wisdom of Him whose way is in the sea, and whose path is in the great waters, and whose footsteps are unknown.

In this manner will all the powers of the soul be purified, exalted, ennobled and enlarged. Some of the forms of holiness which it cultivated here, will there be carried to their highest perfection. Those which were peculiar to the present state, such as *patience, resignation, forgiveness* and *faith* will be transformed into spiritual graces for which the language of earth has as yet no names. Our conceptions, our desires, our moral improvement here, are all conditioned by the body which we inhabit. Then all such hindrances will be laid aside for ever, and who can tell how rapid will be the unfolding of every spiritual excellence, and how vast will be the progress of the soul as it is changed from glory to

glory by the unmeasured bestowment of the Spirit of the living God.

But at last, the time will come when the mystery of redemption will have been completed. The probation of earth will have been closed. At the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, the dead shall be raised incorruptible. At that solemn moment, all the souls of the children of men will be re-united to the bodies which they formerly inhabited. This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Then will the race of Adam be called to judgment, those that have done good to the resurrection of life, and those that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation. As they come forth from their graves they will be found, some on the right hand, and some on the left hand of the Son of Man. Every one will there be judged according to his works. Then shall the Judge say to those on the right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; and then shall he say to them on the left hand, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Then will the soul, purified and exalted to the perfection of holiness, united to a body made like unto the glorious body of Christ, enter in full into that state of supreme felicity prepared for it by God. I think that the scriptures distinctly teach us, that the race of man for which Christ interposed, and whose nature he assumed, will be raised in rank above its natural condition, that is, the rank which we inherited as the children of Adam. A special and wonderful glory was bestowed on Christ as the reward of his deep humiliation, his perfect obedience, and his bitter and ignominious death. This special glory, will be shared by all those who are one with him. Where the Forerunner entered there shall

his followers enter. We shall sit down with him on his throne, as he has overcome and sat down with his Father on his throne. So shall we be ever with the Lord.

Here we are left by the scriptures. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. The conceptions of men could not comprehend the ultimate glory of the blessed in Christ. We have however the means for forming some estimate of their blessedness. Think, in the first place how God has loved us. Observe at what expense he has removed every obstacle to our most perfect happiness. There were *moral* obstacles in the way of the bestowment of his favor. He gave his only begotten Son for our redemption, and these were removed by the work of Christ. There were *physical* obstacles. Our souls, united with these bodies, could not rise to the perfection of which they are capable. They are advanced in glory during the period between death and the resurrection. Again, mortal bodies could not be the tabernacle for a spirit raised to such perfection. This corruptible is therefore made incorruptible. Each adapted to the other, they are re-united to enter together the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Now if the love of God made all this preparation for our ultimate state, is it possible for finite mind to conceive of the glory to which we are then to be exalted? Love infinite as his wisdom and power and holiness will then expend upon us its inexhaustible munificence. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. "And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying unto me the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them; and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sor-

row, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

Now compare for a moment the knowledge of mankind before the advent of the Messiah, with the revelation which he made of the invisible world, if you would comprehend the fullness of meaning contained in the words, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. He has created for us a new and inconceivably glorious destiny. He has taught us how we may attain to the possession of that immortality which he has purchased for us. He bestows that Holy Spirit by which we are made meet to be partakers with the saints in light. He is the way and the truth and the life. No man can come unto the Father but through him. He that believeth on him shall never come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.

1st. If all this be true we see at once that the great business of this mortal life is to prepare for the immortality revealed to us by Christ. That we are unprepared for it, without renewing and sanctifying grace, is evident. Our most important concern on earth, then, is to make our calling and election sure. Compared with this how useless is the labor for wealth, the struggle for power, the thirst for reputation or the pursuit after knowledge. These all terminate here, they have no bearing upon those approaching stages of existence at which we may arrive by faith in Christ. And if these comparatively serious pursuits become, in view of eternity, so vain and contemptible, what language can describe the indecency of a life of sensual pleasure and conventional trifling, which even an earnest man of the world despises as too frivolous to be endured. What a shame is it for those to whom such a destiny has been revealed, to live like the heathen who know of nothing beyond the grave; nay, so to live that even the most thoughtful of the

heathen would have looked upon them with contempt. This appears shameful enough now, but how will it appear at the hour of death, at the day of judgment, nay, through a long, long eternity ?

Say, sages, say,
Wits, oracles, say, dreamers of gay dreams,
How will ye weather an eternal night
When such expedients fail ?

2d. This subject illustrates to us the nature of that preparation which our condition demands. If such stages of existence are before us, if every thing earthly is to be laid aside at the grave, then the preparation that we need is the cultivation of our spiritual nature. If moreover, our happiness in the other state, depends upon our moral likeness to God, then it is to the cultivation of our religious nature that all our care should be directed. The reading of the scriptures, communion with God in prayer, and the improvement of our souls by the practice of charity are the means which he has prescribed for our preparation for heaven. With this is always to be combined the forsaking of the world with its affections and lusts. It is certainly strange to behold a soul aspiring after communion with Christ, yet eager in the pursuit of worldly amusement, and, in everything but the mere name, conformed to the world, and, yielding itself up blindly to its sensual and alluring vanities. It is only by coming out from the world, and bearing the cross of Christ and really living a holy and devout life, that we can become prepared for the blessedness of the righteous.

3d. How full is the consolation which this subject offers to those who mourn the loss of Christian friends. It is the will of God that we and all that we love shall return to dust. But how blessed beyond conception is the grave of the believer ? We bid an adieu to the saint at death, but we sorrow not as those that have no hope. While we bury all that is mortal in the grave,

we know that the spirit has gained the victory for eternity. It shall sin no more, it shall stumble no more from human infirmity. Strong in immortal youth it has entered already upon that upward path which conducts it directly to the right hand of God. We deposit the precious dust in the earth, in full confidence that those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. That corruptible flesh was redeemed by Christ, and he will raise it incorruptible. It shall ere long be re-united with the spirit that has just left it, both having become inconceivably glorious, and thus it shall be forever with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

4th. These same truths should fill our own souls with joyful confidence while we look forward to our own decease. The last sickness, the agonies of death, the final adieu to every thing on earth, await each one of us. But if we be the faithful and simple hearted followers of Christ, how glorious a privilege it is to die. It is to cease from sin, and to be perfectly holy henceforward forever; to escape the last, the very last danger; to bid adieu forever to infirmity, to sorrow, and the very liability of being lost; it is to enter at once upon that state in which, without hindrance or weakness, all our powers will be fully developed, and we shall be growing forever in likeness to Christ. It involves, it is true, the parting for a short season from all that we love on earth; but it gives us in exchange the company of those whom we have loved before, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Nor shall these alone be our associates. There are the martyrs, confessors and holy men whose works we have read, and whose example we have labored to imitate. There are the Apostles and Prophets whose words have so often filled us with humble penitence and spiritual joy. There is Christ himself who has loved us, and given himself for us, manifesting to the redeemed the fullness of

his love. And this shall go on increasing and becoming more and more joyful forever. Let us strive to bear these truths habitually in mind. It is not enough that we yield them a cold and speculative belief. We must have our hearts penetrated and imbued with such conceptions, if we would enjoy the full benefit of them at the hour of death. Nor this alone. Such thoughts as these will moderate our love of the world, place every thing in its true position, and give it its just proportion ; and thus we shall become daily more and more meet for the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

You are all too deeply aware of the significancy that has been given to these remarks by the events of the past week. A member of our little congregation, who has for many years united with us in the service of God on earth, has, since our last meeting here, been called to serve him in the temple not made with hands. It is seemly that I refer to this event, for the purpose of strengthening the faith and animating the hopes of those who are left behind. This is not the presence, nor this the occasion on which to speak of those personal graces with which she was embellished, or those social endowments with which she was enriched. I speak of her simply as a follower of Christ, for it is as such alone that she is esteemed in the society which she has now entered.

Mrs. Caswell was blessed with a disposition peculiarly amiable, and with affections uncommonly genial and benignant. These sanctified by divine grace rendered her the ornament of the circle in which she moved, and almost the idol of those who were so fortunate as to be numbered among her intimate friends. She was an exemplary disciple of Christ, from the day on which she first relied on him for salvation. Constitutionally happy herself, her presence was the unfailing source of happiness to others. Fulfilling with admirable propriety

every duty to which in the providence of God she was called ; shedding around her the hallowed influences of consistent piety and universal charity, in the midst of her usefulness, after a brief illness, on the morning of Tuesday last, she was summoned to enter upon the rest that remaineth for the people of God. In some respects her Christian example was peculiar. A diligent student of the scriptures, she received their instructions with that childlike simplicity, which is one of the rarest and richest of Christian attainments. Encumbering herself with neither inferential doctrines, nor speculative generalizations, she meekly received the word of God as a message from her Father in Heaven to his child on earth, and she labored habitually to conform her life to the plain announcement of his will. She did not so frequently as many others unite in meetings for associated devotion ; but she was specially devout in private and at home. It was her habit with childlike confidence, to present before the throne of heavenly grace her joys and her sorrows, her wants and her fears ; and she did it in the full assurance that her prayers would be answered. She received the promises of the Gospel as the words of her dearest friend, in the sure belief that it was pleasing to God to bestow on her every thing that she needed both for time and eternity. Enjoying this confidence, she was careful to keep herself unspotted from the world. One of her latest conversations was directed to this subject, and she then expressed her alarm at the spirit of worldliness which is so rapidly overspreading the professed church of Christ. I pray God that her warning may be heeded by us all, and may teach us that the thoughtless pleasures of those who know not God are unseemly for those who are preparing to dwell forever with a crucified and risen Redeemer. It is also proper to remark that her charity was exemplary and in some respects unusual. In many associations of benevolence and in objects of

charity not specified in the gospel she had, perhaps, less interest than many other christians. Her heart however turned instinctively towards every form of misery in her own immediate vicinity. To visit the sick, to relieve the widow and orphan, to carry the message of salvation to those that are perishing around us, these were the objects that particularly interested her. To them she was ever ready to contribute not only her pecuniary means but her personal effort. Her last visit was a visit of Christian consolation to a friend in apparently her last illness. Her deeds of mercy may be easily known to any one who will follow her example and comfort the afflicted whom her death has deprived of one of their most sympathizing and liberal benefactors. In choosing this course, she however, in no manner, wished to undervalue the modes of benevolence which others might choose to adopt. She thought that this was the path of duty which Christ had pointed out for her, and she chose it because he had first chosen it for her. Thus nourishing her soul by communion with God, and purifying her affections by deeds of charity to man, she was daily preparing for Heaven, when unexpectedly to her friends, though probably not so to herself, her probation was ended, and she fell asleep in Jesus. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

My brethren, what is the lesson which we are to learn from this bereavement? Plainly this, that we must all, each one for himself, pass through this great change. Soon the seat of one and another of us will be vacated in the house of prayer. The sickness unto death will fasten itself upon each one of us. The last agony must be borne, and the last farewell to earth must be uttered. The mourners will bear us to the home appointed for all the living, and our home, henceforth, will be in Eter-

nity. Are we living in preparation for this our great change? O let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. If we do these things we shall never be moved, for so an entrance shall be abundantly administered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

NOTE.

The following brief obituary notice, as a further memorial of the deceased, will, it is hoped, be acceptable to her friends and the friends of her family.

Mrs. Esther Lois Caswell was the fourth daughter and youngest child of the late Edward K. Thompson, Esq. and Sarah Kuhn his wife. She was born in Providence, September 1, 1802.

Her childhood and youth were surrounded by the happy influences of an affectionate and well-ordered family. Few children have received a larger share of parental care and tenderness, and fewer still, perhaps, have returned to their benefactors an equal measure of filial affection and reverence.

She early gave promise of those excellencies of character which so much endeared her to her friends in after life. She is remembered by many as the amiable school girl whose diligence and propriety of behaviour secured the esteem of her instructors, and whose kind and courteous manners rendered her a favorite with her companions. Her disposition was frank, cheerful, generous and confiding. She practised no insincerity herself and suspected none in others. She acquired in youth a fondness for reading and was early conversant with some of the best productions of English Literature. Her predilections were for Poetry. The writings of Cowper, Rogers, Campbell, Montgomery, Mrs. Hemans, and Scott, to say nothing of others, were to her sources of inexhaustible pleasure. And so retentive was her memory for Poetry that many a beautiful passage from her favorite authors learned in youth, was by a little effort recalled and repeated after the lapse of many years.

But the bright scenes of her early life were not unvisited by sorrow. At the age of twelve years she lost an only brother,*—a most promising youth of seventeen,—by drowning; a few years later a much beloved sister† was removed by the hand of death; later still her father,‡ to whom she was attached by every sentiment of filial affection, was taken from her in the short space of a few hours, by disease of the heart.

These sad events were long the subjects of daily and mournful reminiscence in the family. The second particularly, had a most salu-

*Edward K. Thompson, Jr. died Aug. 13th, 1814. †Mrs. Elizabeth K. Nightingale, wife of Samuel Nightingale, Esq. died Sept. 10th, 1819. ‡Died March 8th, 1825.

tary religious influence upon the character of her whom we now deplore, in turning her away from the pursuit of light and fugitive pleasures to meditate upon the solemn realities of life, upon her own accountability to God, and upon the way of salvation through the mediation of Christ. The impressions of an early religious education were rendered deep and effectual by the corrective discipline of affliction. Soon after the death of her sister she became a conscientious and prayerful communicant in the Episcopal Church. The teachings of the Holy scriptures, the duties and offices of religion, she regarded with peculiar sacredness. As a teacher in the Sabbath School, then just beginning to attract the attention of the Christian public, she found an employment congenial at once to her own desire of moral improvement and her benevolent interest in the culture of others. Years of social and domestic happiness passed, one after another, marked by no incidents of special moment till at length new duties claimed her care.

She was married on the 17th of May, 1830. The new relations of wife and mother she adorned with every virtue and every grace which frail humanity can boast. Of her little family circle she was the centre and ornament, alike loving and loved of all. Cheerful and happy herself she possessed more than most others the precious gift of diffusing happiness about her. In her friendships she was warm and faithful. Enmities she had not. Her keen sensibilities were quickly wounded by rudeness or neglect, but the tablet of her generous heart contained no record of resentment. If she was ever ambitious it was in the reciprocities of kindness. It would have done violence to her nature to receive and not give.

In the management and culture of her children one of the chief sources of her influence was the art of making their home happy. For this purpose she was almost always with them. She sought out for their vacant hours the most inviting games, sports and recreations, combining innocence and pleasure, and embarked in them with an earnestness which might seem to suppose that they were intended for her own special amusement. In respect to the moral and religious education of her children she had great faith in the Scripture precept, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Accordingly she labored with ceaseless care to imbue the minds of her own with the fear and the love of God; to lead them with maternal love beside the still waters of Christian faith and hope and charity. But more instructive than all precepts to them, was her own beautiful example. They listened to her reading of the Scriptures, to her familiar explanations of them, and joined in the touching devotions of her private chamber, and could not but feel that happiness and religion were one and inseparable.

It has been remarked that Mrs. Caswell at the age of about eighteen years became a communicant in the Episcopal church. Accidental circumstances alone prevented her from receiving Confirmation. Her views of the ordinances, however, as she was then led to examine the subject, were not entirely in harmony with the practise of the church in which she was educated. She doubted the propriety of Infant Baptism, because it did not seem to her to be authorized by any command or example of the New Testament. To the mere mode of Baptism she attached little comparative importance, but gave the preference to immersion as being in her judgment most consonant to the scriptures. With her, however, religion was a personal thing and realized its true development in bringing all the powers of the mind into subjection to the will of Christ. With her, above all temples and all ordinances was the soul penetrated with a sense of its own guilt and of the infinite mercy revealed in Christ, and humbly seeking by the aid of divine grace to do the will of God.

But whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. The hand of affliction, which recalled her youthful steps from the paths of sin, was still over her in more mature life. The loss of a beloved child* in the autumn of 1837, seemed to have its perfect work in the sanctification of her own heart. It was then in the hour of most touching bereavement that she came to know, to use her own words, as she had never known before, what was meant by, "the peace of God which passeth understanding." Feeling it to be a duty and a privilege to confess Christ before men, and holding the sentiments before stated respecting the ordinance of Christian Baptism, she deemed it most suitable to connect herself with the church of which her husband had long been a member and in whose worship she had devoutly participated for several years. She was accordingly baptized July 1st, 1838, and became a member of the First Baptist Church in Providence, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. William Hague. In taking this step she was anxious to express no disrespect for the church in which she was early nurtured. It is but justice to her memory to say, that to the end of her life she retained a predilection for much of its service, a hearty approval of its Evangelical doctrines, and a warm personal attachment to many of its members. Her change of membership, and her difference of views respecting one of the ordinances, was attended by no alienation of Christian regards and no separation of Christian friendships. Sectarian rivalries and bitter controversies professedly for the good of religion she held in very low esteem. They were repugnant to her tastes and feelings, and in her judgment alike foreign to the spirit of the Gospel and often subversive of its great end. It is hardly necessary to say that in her view, any form or profession of religion

*Alexis Caswell died Oct. 13th, 1837, aged 2 years and 2 months.

which did not end in personal piety, in a sense of unworthiness and deep humility before God and in looking to the atoning sacrifice of Christ as the sinner's only refuge, came far short of meeting the real wants of a sinful human being.

For the poor and the suffering the subject of this notice had the warmest and most active sympathy. Her heart and her hands so far as her ability permitted, were always open for their relief. With her it was a practical and every day maxim, which Christian benevolence will know how to interpret, "we shall never be the poorer for helping the needy." The suffering and necessitous who came under her own notice were the first to claim her charity. Others more remote, however, were not overlooked. The hopes and promises of the Gospel were so precious to her own soul that she earnestly coveted for all others a participation in the same blessings. The great enterprise of Christian Missions enlisted her prayers and her support. To be absent from the monthly concert of prayer for the spread of the Gospel she always felt to be a personal privation. She loved to hear of the triumphs of the Cross; she loved to contemplate the prophetic period when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

It may not be improper to add, as pertaining to the true delineation of her character, that she highly appreciated in others, and possessed in a good degree herself, what is properly termed a cultivated taste. This was indicated in her conversation, in her choice of books, and in her preferences of character. The beauties of Art and of Nature were to her sources of real and sometimes of almost unbounded pleasure. Pictures, plants, flowers, fields, woods and mountains, she never ceased to admire. An excursion in the country when the foliage of Autumn had assumed its varied and glorious hues was more instructive to her moral sentiments, more inspiring to her devotion than many a formal lecture on Christian duties.

It is not intended in any thing here said to leave the impression that the character of the deceased was faultless. Such a suggestion would have been offensive to her own quick sense of truth and propriety. To err is human. No one was more conscious of imperfections than herself. But in the view of those who knew her best, her faults were so inconsiderable, were so encompassed and overshadowed by qualities of the most sterling worth, that they made but a transient appearance; and in the retrospect seem scarce to deserve a passing thought, much less a record.

Of the closing scenes of her earthly existence little need be said. After a brief illness of five days she departed this life a little before the rising of sun on the 25th of June, 1850, in the forty-eighth year of her age. Her disease in the opinion of her physicians was Erysip-

las of the lungs. It was attended with comparatively little pain. Her powers of perception and reason were unclouded to the end ; and when the final moment came, she expired in a manner so gentle, and retained an expression of countenance so placid and benignant, that death seemed but the friendly messenger of rest to her weary limbs, and of peace to her emancipated spirit.

Mrs. Caswell was the mother of six children, three only of whom survive to mourn her loss and cherish the memory of her virtues ; the mortal remains of three repose by the side of her own in the North Buryial Ground of this city, there to remain till the dead shall be raised incorruptible and death shall be swallowed up in victory.

A. C.

August 15, 1850.





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